



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

401481

JUL 6 1978

Honorable Sidney R. Yates
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Mr. Yates:

During the June 19, 1978, Subcommittee hearing on the Bikini situation, there was considerable discussion on the role performed by Dr. Robert A. Conard of Brookhaven National Laboratory in the April 1978 annual medical survey of the Bikini Island residents. You will recall that there was confusion as to just when Dr. Conard last was on Bikini Island and what he might have told the residents of Bikini Island when he was there as to the consumption of local coconuts.

Dr. Conard, who served as Head, Marshall Islands Medical Team, Medical Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York, has forwarded to us a copy of his trip report of this annual medical survey, which took place between March 25 - April 25, 1978. A copy of the report also has been submitted for insertion in the June 19, 1978, hearing record, but I thought you might like to review a copy at this time.

You will note, for example, that the Acting Magistrate of the Bikini Island residents was told of the preliminary analysis of the April findings of the whole body count examinations. Dr. Conard also expressed concern over the fact that the residents were eating Bikini Island coconuts, and suggested that they eat the Eneu Island coconuts rather than the coconuts grown on Bikini Island. At that time, i.e., March 25 - April 25, 1978, the Department of Energy had not determined that the Eneu Island coconuts were suspect. The Department of the Interior was not informed of the new development until mid-May and Dr. Conard, in the field, did not have access to any information to that effect.

I hope that Dr. Conard's trip report will clear up the misunderstandings on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. RUTH G. VAN CLEVE

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director
Office of Territorial Affairs

Enclosure

cc: [Dr. R. Conard]

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Mr. Wray
2/2/78